

## **Haddam-Killingworth Recreation Department**

PO Box 569, Higganum, CT 06441  
Robyne Brennan, Director of Recreation

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To: Connecticut General Assembly

RE: House Bill 6574 - An Act Concerning Municipal Youth Camps

Dear Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing testimony on this bill. The passing of Bill 6574 for the Haddam-Killingworth Recreation Department would be an administrative, staffing and financial burden for many reasons including:

- 1) The requirement to have an APRN/Physician on retainer would exceed our staffing budget for camp. It would be difficult to find an APRN or Physician on retainer who would be available to work at our camp from 7:30 – 5:00 pm as that profession is already short staffed.
- 2) Increased office staff to keep up with the OEC requirements at the administrative level to oversee the changes.
- 3) The risk of delay start dates for campers with medical needs. We currently work out a plan with the parents and use the appropriate medication administration forms with med certified staff all in a timely manner so that the child does not lose out on any camp time.
- 4) Increased costs for background check staff over 18 from \$20.50 to \$88.
- 5) We have certified Lifeguards who are mainly 16 – 19 years old. Finding an Aquatic Director over 20 years old will be a challenge as there already is a huge lifeguard shortage along with less applicants applying for jobs. Our older guards are 18-19 years old and fully capable to be in a supervisory role at the high school pool.
- 6) We do not have our own facility and use the public school. We are given one bathroom to use which might not meet the facility ratio of toilets and sinks to campers.

In our area we are the main affordable day camp and service families in over 4 towns. In order to comply with state licensure, we would be forced to raise our registration fees which would be passed along to the families. There is already a financial hardship for many families in our town. The past two years, we were approved to receive the Expansion Grant from the State of CT Department of Education which we used for camp scholarships. The need would be much greater if we have to raise our fees.

We have been running a safe and affordable summer camp for over 40 years. The residents of our town depend on us for their child care needs. There are numerous private licensed camps in the surrounding area for them to choose from.

Our staff attends a two-day camp staff training where we provide a comprehensive overview of our summer camp staff manual which outlines all the policies and procedures of our camp. This includes going over all of our safety protocols and guidelines. All of our staff attend a training on social-emotional learning. All of our Head Counselors and Adult Staff are certified in CPR and First Aid as well as Epi-Pen and Medication Administration Training.

Each of our camps/age groups have a designated Adult Head Counselor along with counselors who are over the age of 16. We maintain a 1 to 12 staff to camper ratio. Our CIT's go through a structured training process as well before they are assigned to work with a group.

The passing of this bill will put many camps at risk of being shut down if they are not able to comply. This would take away the main source of affordable childcare for many towns such as ours. We appreciate the efforts the Children's Committee is doing to ensure the safety of children; however, we already operate to a high standard of care and oppose House Bill 6574 due to the unnecessary burden it will place on our department this making camp unaffordable or available to the families we serve.